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Space for oldies? Ageing society, older people and the UK 'cycle boom'.

The UK population is ageing and this poses major concerns as to whether our communities are equipped to offer quality of life for older people in terms of housing, mobility and other services. This paper starts from the premise that cycling could play a more significant role among older people in fostering independent mobility and social engagement and therefore promote health and wellbeing and better quality of life.

Research and policy has traditionally focused on supporting younger cycling (and more recently, women and ethnic minority cycling) but little attention has been given to older people. Moreover, policy discourse and guidance on older people's mobility, within the realms of transport, tends to focus on community/public transport and walking. Perhaps it is not surprising therefore that only 1 per cent of all journeys by over 65 year olds in the UK are made by cycle compared to 9 per cent in Germany, 15 per cent in Denmark and a 23 per cent in The Netherlands (Pucher & Buehler, 2012). We argue that more attention needs to be given to designing the physical and social conditions that provide opportunities for older cycling and also technology.

The presentation will provide an overview of the EPSRC funded* 3-year **cycle BOOM** study (commenced October 2013) that aims to develop a deep understanding of cycling amongst the older population. It will explain and reflect on the variety of novel methods that are being implemented in four UK case areas (Oxford, Reading, Bristol and Cardiff). Preliminary findings from the first wave of fieldwork carried out in summer 2014 will be discussed. This will provide insight into cycling episodes across the whole life-course; how cycling journeys are practiced and performed by older people; and novel ways in which the (dis)benefits of cycling to older people's wellbeing can be represented. The paper concludes with some commentary on our ambition to convey evidence to key actors in new ways so that the right conditions for cycling within a rapidly ageing society are understood and accomplished.

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